

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJ: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT ROGER MORRIS EDITORIAL, SATURDAY, MAY 11, NEW YORK TIMES HEADLINED "THE PRESS AS CLOAK AND SUITOR."

2. NOWHERE IS THE ADMIRATION OF HENRY KISSINGER MORE APPARENT THAN IN THE BLURB-LIKE SUPERLATIVES OF HIS PRESS CLIPPINGS. THE "MERLIN OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY . . . THE NAME THAT MADE FOREIGN POLICY FAMOUS," SAYS NEWSWEEK. ONE OF 56 SECRETARIES OF STATE, TIME THINKS HE HAS A CHANCE OF BEING REMEMBERED AS "THE GREATEST IN U.S. HISTORY." TO MURREY MARDER, THE EXPERIENCED DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT OF THE WASHINGTON POST, HE "MAY WELL BE THE BIGGEST, PERMANENT, FLOATING FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT IN OUR HISTORY. . . ." IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN THE NEW YORK TIMES THAT WE ARE INDEED LIVING IN THE AGE OF "PAX KISSINGERUS." SUCH COVERAGE--PLUS HIS STUNNING DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS--HAS HELPED TO MAKE HIM "AMERICA'S MOST ADMIRER MAN," AS MEASURED BY THE GALLUP POLL.

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3. THIS IS THE SAME KISSINGER WHO ALSO HAS GUIDED AMERICAN POLICY THROUGH A SAVAGE BOMBING OF INDOCHINA, THE NEAR COLLAPSE OF OUR INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL POSITION, AN OMINOUS ALIENATION OF JAPAN, A BACK-BITING SPLIT WITH

WESTERN EUROPE, SILENCE IN RESPONSE TO HUMAN RIGHTS OUTRAGES FROM BRAZIL TO BANGLADESH, AND AN ALL BUT UNCONTESTED CONGRESSIONAL MASSACRE OF FOREIGN AID, THE DESPERATELY NEEDED ALONG WITH THE DUBIOUS. NOT LEAST, BY HIS OWN CLAIM, HE HAS ALL THE WHILE BEEN ONE OF THE MOST INTIMATE PARTICIPANTS IN RICHARD NIXON'S ADMINISTRATION ("LIKE TWO MEN IN A FOXHOLE," HE TOLD ORIANA FALLACI, THE ITALIAN JOURNALIST), WHERE THE COLOSSAL SCALE OF CORRUPTION SEEMS TO RIVAL THE DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

4. THIS SIDE OF THE KISSINGER RECORD IS NOT SO READILY APPARENT. DESPITE CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESS AND THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION, THE MEDIA SEEM TO HAVE MADE A SEPARATE PEACE WITH HENRY ALFRED KISSINGER. LIKE HIS OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS, THIS PEACE IS A PRODUCT OF KISSINGER'S VIRTUOSITY, HIS HARD WORK, THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF THE PARTIES, AND, IN SOME RESPECTS, SHEER CHANCE. YET THE SETTLEMENT HAS ITS RISKS, LIKE ANY OTHER, AND THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS MAY TURN OUT TO BE AS IMPORTANT TO AMERICA AS DIPLOMACY ABROAD. FOR IF THE PRICE OF THIS PEACE IS MEDIA SELF-CENSORSHIP, A SURRENDER OF THE INDEPENDENT ROLE OF JOURNALISTS IN CHOOSING TOPICS TO WRITE ABOUT, REPORTING ON PERSONALITIES INSTEAD OF POLICIES, AND THE ABSENCE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS (AND THERE ARE SIGNS THAT IT HAS BEEN ALL OF THESE), THEN THE PEACE MAY BE SEEN AS LEGITIMIZING AN UNSATISFACTORY STATUS QUO, AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE NEW JOURNALISM THAT IS NEEDED IN COVERAGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

5. PARTLY AS A RESULT OF KISSINGER'S ENERGETIC ACCESSIBILITY, THE MEDIA, WHILE COVERING KISSINGER AND WHAT HE HAS CONCENTRATED UPON, HAVE A TENDENCY TO IGNORE WHAT HE IGNORES. NOT ONLY DO WE THUS LACK AN ACCOUNTING OF THE WEAKNESSES OR OVERSIGHTS OF A SINGULARLY POWERFUL UNCLASSIFIED

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SECRETARY OF STATE; MORE IMPORTANT, THERE IS THE DANGER THAT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION WILL NOT FASTEN ON ISSUES--EVEN URGENT ONES--THAT ARE NOT TO KISSINGER'S TASTE. FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY IS PROBABLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CASE IN POINT.

6. THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE OF NEGLECT OF AN ECONOMIC ISSUE BY BOTH KISSINGER AND THE MEDIA WHO COVER HIM IS

THE INCREASINGLY GRAVE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM. IT ISN'T SEEN AS A "KISSINGER" STORY. BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MEDIA HAVE TENDED TO TREAT THE GLOBAL FOOD SCARCITIES OF 1973-1974 AS AN ABERRATION, THE PRODUCT OF THE UNUSUAL SOVIET PURCHASES OR TEMPORARY MARKET FLUCTUATIONS. YET SOME EXPERTS WARN WITH RISING ALARM THAT THE PROBLEM IS

BECOMING CHRONIC, DUE TO UNCHECKED POPULATION GROWTH, MASSIVE GRAIN IMPORTS BY THE U.S.S.R., LIMITS ON YIELDS OF VEGETABLE AND FISH PROTEIN, AND THE RAPID DWINDLING OF WORLD GRAIN RESERVES. IT IS KISSINGER--THE MAN WHO HOLDS DRAMATIC AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCES--WHO MAKES U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ON FOOD. YET HE HAS RECEIVED ONLY THE MOST PERFUNCTORY QUESTIONING ON THIS TOPIC.

7. THE RECORD OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS SUGGESTS THAT KISSINGER HAS PROBABLY SPENT EVEN LESS TIME ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES THAN ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

8. PERHAPS THE MOST FAMILIAR HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM WAS PAKISTAN'S BRUTAL 1971 REPRESSION IN ITS THEN EASTERN WING, KILLING UNCOUNTED THOUSANDS, DRIVING TEN MILLION INTO SQUALID EXILE IN INDIA, AND LEADING EVENTUALLY TO THE INDO-PAKISTANI WAR AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF BANGLADESH. WASHINGTON FOUND IT HARD TO CONDEMN THESE ALL TOO VISIBLE HORRORS (APPARENTLY OUT OF RELUCTANCE TO UPSET A LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN, AND ALSO, IT WAS SAID, TO ALLOW THE U.S. SUBSEQUENTLY TO MEDIATE THE CONFLICT). AT THE TIME, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CLANDESTINELY VIOLATED ITS OWN EMBARGO ON ARMS TO PAKISTAN.

9. ON THE FEW OCCASIONS WHEN HE HAS BEEN QUESTIONED ABOUT SUCH POLICIES, KISSINGER HAS CONVINCINGLY ARGUED

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AGAINST MORALISM IN DIPLOMACY, OR CAST THE ISSUE IN TERMS OF THE LIMITS OF U.S. POWER TO AFFECT INTERNAL AFFAIRS ELSEWHERE, A COGENT POINT FOR MANY IN THE AFTER-MATH OF VIETNAM. BUT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE INVESTIGATION OF WHETHER THOSE WERE REALLY THE ISSUES IN EACH CASE, OR OF KISSINGER'S SPECIFIC ROLE (OR LACK OF INTEREST) IN THE FORMULATION OF THESE POLICIES.

10. TO SOME WHO SAW KISSINGER AT CLOSE RANGE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT HIS EASY MASTERY OF THE MEDIA HELD A PARADOX. THE POISED, CHARMING STATESMAN AT THE MICROPHONE WAS ALSO THE INSECURE, SHY, ANXIOUS MAN BACK IN THE OFFICE WHO WORRIED ABOUT TRIVIALITIES, OFTEN PAINFULLY ILL AT EASE IN PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS. HIS FAVORITE COMMENT ABOUT ANTIWAR DEMONSTRATORS WAS: "THEY DON'T KNOW WHO THEY

ARE." YET, THAT DIAGNOSIS MIGHT HAVE APPLIED TO THE MAN HIMSELF. DESPITE HIS AWESOME SUCCESS, HE SEEMED TO REMAIN SO SELF-CONSCIOUSLY THE GERMAN-JEWISH IMMIGRANT, EVER AN OUTSIDER IN THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT. THUS HIS DELIBERATE AVERSION TO MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY UNTIL, AS A CLOSE FRIEND REMEMBERS HIM CONFIDING LAST SUMMER, "I AM SECRETARY OF STATE AND MORE MY OWN MAN."

11. THAT LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND IDENTITY MAY WELL EXPLAIN TOO HIS RELUCTANCE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, OR TO APPEAR "SOFT" IN THOSE HE DID DEAL WITH. IF THE AVERELL HARRIMANS COULD RISK COMPASSION WITHOUT FEARING THAT THEIR MOTIVES OR OBJECTIVITY WOULD BE QUESTIONED, IT WAS NOT THE SAME FOR KISSINGER, OR SO HE APPARENTLY FELT. SIMILARLY, THE MAN SO CLEARLY IN COMMAND OF THE SUBSTANCE OF ISSUES SEEMED TO NEED AS WELL THE SUPPORT OF PERSONAL FEALTY. "REMEMBER," HE ONCE WHISPERED TO ME AFTER AN UNCOMFORTABLE MEETING AT WHICH SOME OF US HAD DISSENTED ON THE PLANNED INVASION OF CAMBODIA, "I SUPPORTED YOU ON AFRICAN POLICY." IT WAS AN ARGUABLE POINT, BUT THE SAME INSECURITY AND URGE TO PERSONALIZE EXPLAIN KISSINGER'S ARDENT ATTENTION TO PRESS RELATIONS AND HIS ACUTE SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM.

12. NOR HAVE THE MEDIA COME TO GRIPS WITH THE GLIB PARADOX OF KISSINGER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CORRUPTION ALL UNCLASSIFIED

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